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THE RITZ.

DICK, WAIT!

WAIT!

WAIT FOR WHAT, BREATHLESS? WAIT FOR YOU TO TRY TO TELL ME THAT MY PARTNER, MY *FRIEND*, IS A REMORSELESS KILLER?

AND HE'S BEEN DOING IT RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE THIS WHOLE TIME?

THAT'S JUST IT, DICK--PAT'S *NOT* THE KILLER.

I KNOW FOR CERTAIN HE ISN'T.

OH, YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN. AND *HOW* DO YOU KNOW THIS FOR *CERTAIN?*

I...I'D RATHER NOT SAY.

WHAT DOES *THAT* MEAN?

CAN'T YOU TRUST ME, DICK? AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, HOW *CLOSE* WE'VE BECOME, COULDN'T YOU JUST--

ENOUGH WITH THE GAMES! IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING, THEN TELL ME!

I...I--

TELL ME!

I KNOW PAT CAN'T BE THE KILLER BECAUSE THE NIGHT GARY HILLIKER WAS MURDERED...

...PAT WAS WITH *ME.*

DICK, PLEASE. YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND--

THERE'S NOTHING TO UNDERSTAND. YOU WERE WITH PAT. THAT'S AS SIMPLE AS CAN BE.

NO, IT'S *NOT.* PAT WAS ONLY--

I DON'T NEED YOU TO FILL IN THE BLANKS, MAHONEY.

I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY ALL ON MY OWN.

WHAT KIND OF GIRL DO YOU THINK I AM, TRACY?

I ALWAYS FIGURED YOU THOUGHT LITTLE OF ME, I JUST DIDN'T KNOW HOW LITTLE.

BREATHLESS, LOOK--

NO, *YOU* LOOK. PAT WAS *HELPING* ME.

FANGS IS *BLACKMAILING* ME.

I'VE BEEN UNDER HIS THUMB FOR I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG NOW. SOMEONE TOLD ME PAT'S A GOOD GUY WITH A STREAK OF HARD JUSTICE IN HIM, SO I SOUGHT HIM OUT.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

HE DIDN'T LOOK AT ME AND JUST SEE A NIGHTCLUB SINGER. HE SAW A PERSON.

NOW WAIT A MINUTE--

SAVE IT. I KNOW WHAT YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME...

...AND I KNOW THAT'S *NEVER* GOING TO CHANGE.

TESS, YOU DON'T GET IT, AND I KNOW THIS IS GOING TO BE HARD FOR YOU TO HEAR--

--BUT DICK'S GOING ABOUT THIS *ALL WRONG.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, PAT, THAT'S ACTUALLY *NOT* HARD FOR ME TO HEAR.

GOOD. BECAUSE IT'S WHY I WENT BEHIND HIS BACK AND TOOK THOSE FILES. TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE KNEW ABOUT THAT. HEAR ME OUT ON THIS--

--DICK'S LOOKING AT THE BODIES AND HOW THEY WERE KILLED, AND MAYBE HE'S RIGHT-- MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING TO THAT.

BUT WHAT HE'S NOT LOOKING AT, AT LEAST NOT LOOKING AT *ENOUGH,* ARE THE VICTIMS THEMSELVES.

WHY KILL THESE TWO-BIT CRIMINALS? WHY THEM? THERE *HAS* TO BE A REASON.

MAYBE...MAYBE IT'S SOMEONE LOOKING TO SHOULDER IN AND GRAB *POWER?* WHOEVER THE BLANK IS, THEY CLEARLY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH FANGS.

MAYBE THEY'RE TRYING TO MAKE HIM WEAKER IN ORDER RUB HIM OUT FOR GOOD?

IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT...I DON'T KNOW.

THESE GUYS WHO'VE BEEN KNOCKED OFF SO FAR...THEY'RE LOW-LEVEL GOONS. THEY'RE *NOBODIES.* FANGS, LIPS, BIG BOY, TAKE YOUR PICK--THEY CAN REPLACE THESE CHARACTERS WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT.

SO WHY GO THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE JUST TO OPEN UP SPACE AT THE BOTTOM?

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, PAT. EVERYTHING WE'VE SEEN TELLS ME THAT THIS BLANK ISN'T JUST SOME SADISTIC KILLER. THIS PERSON IS *SMARTER* THAN THAT, WHICH MEANS THEY HAVE A *PLAN.*

YEAH...THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF. AND IF THE BLANK *IS* A COP, HE KNOWS OUR EVERY MOVE.

HOW DO WE EVER GET ONE STEP AHEAD OF HIM?

EASY...

...WE FIGURE OUT WHO HE'S GOING TO KILL NEXT.

SLAM

DENBROUGH--WHERE'S PAT?

WHY? WHO ELSE IS LOOKING FOR HIM?

SHEESH, IF I HAD A DOLLAR EVERY TIME I WAS ASKED *THAT* QUESTION.

WELL, TO BE FAIR, I'D ONLY HAVE *ONE* DOLLAR.

IT WAS TESS LOOKING FOR HIM.

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT? I'LL TELL YOU THE SAME THING I TOLD HER--PAT'S NOT ON DUTY. WELL, TECHNICALLY, AT LEAST. THE TWO OF YOU SEEM TO *ALWAYS* BE ON DUTY.

BUT TRACY, WAIT--I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.

I FOUND IT ON THE FRONT DESK A LITTLE WHILE AGO. DON'T KNOW WHO LEFT IT, AND I ASKED AROUND--NO ONE SAW ANYONE COME OR GO.

THERE'S NO TELLING WHO IT'S FROM, I'M SORRY TO SAY.

MY GOD.

...AND WE KEEP CIRCLING BACK TO THE *SAME* PLACE. IF THE BLANK IS KILLING THESE LOW-LEVEL CRIMINALS, HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE IS BEING TARGETED NEXT?

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, TESS--

--THE PATTERN OF VICTIMS IS NEARLY INDISTINGUISHABLE.

BUT THAT PATTERN'S ABOUT TO BE *BROKEN.*

THE BLANK LAID IT OUT RIGHT HERE.

IS THAT...IS THAT *BLOOD* ON THAT LETTER?

IT IS. IT CAME FROM *MONTY'S SEVERED HAND,* WHICH IS BACK AT THE STATION.

WHAT KIND OF SICK GAME IS THIS PERSON PLAYING?

I DON'T KNOW, PARTNER. BUT IT'S DEFINITELY A GAME. THE BLANK LEFT THIS NOTE FOR ME-- HE'S TOYING WITH US.

I DON'T THINK HE WANTS TO BE CAUGHT... MORE LIKE HE WANTS TO BE NOTICED.

"YOU CLEAN UP THIS CITY'S FILTH, AND I ADMIRE THAT. BUT YOU DON'T CLEAN IT UP ENOUGH.

"THERE ARE NO HALF MEASURES IN THIS GAME, AND NOW I'M FORCED TO FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED."

FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED? WHAT...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

I DON'T KNOW. IT'S THE ONLY THING I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT SINCE I FIRST READ IT, AND I JUST ***DON'T KNOW.***

LET'S TALK THIS THROUGH...

...THE BLANK'S BEEN GOING AFTER NO ONE BUT CRIMINALS SO FAR, BUT THEY'VE NEVER CALLED ATTENTION TO IT, UNTIL NOW. THAT MUST MEAN THIS IS SOMEHOW ***DIFFERENT.***

BUT WHAT HAS DICK LEFT UNFINISHED? EVER SINCE MAKING DETECTIVE, HE'S PUT AWAY ***EVERYONE*** HE'S GONE UP AGAINST.

NO, ACTUALLY... HE ***HASN'T.***

IF THE BLANK ***IS*** A COP, THEN THERE'S ONE PIECE OF SO-CALLED FILTH THAT WOULD BE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO THEM. THE ONE PERSON DICK ***HASN'T*** PUT BEHIND BARS.

OH, MY GOD...

...PAT, GET YOUR COAT. GET YOUR GUN. DO IT ***NOW.***

"THE BLANK'S GOING AFTER *CHIEF BRANDON.*"

THUMP

JIMMY, THAT YOU?

I THOUGHT I HEARD A NOISE COMING--

SHIT. JIMMY, I CAN'T--I CAN'T LEAVE.

I'LL CALL SOMEONE. I'LL GET YOU HELP. HANG IN THERE, AND--

AAAAHHH!

HELLO, CHIEF. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

WHO THE *HELL* ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

LOOK, WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, ALL THESE KILLINGS, THEY'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH *ME*.

OH, BUT THEY DO.

PEOPLE LIKE YOU--LIKE MANLIS, LIKE CAPRICE, LIKE *ALL* OF YOU--YOU USE *POWER* TO TERRORIZE THIS CITY AND ALLOW CRIME TO INFEST EVERY CORNER OF IT.

IT'S TIME YOU LEARNED WHAT REAL POWER IS...

...AND FEEL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE *AFRAID*.

YOU?! IT CAN'T BE--YOU CAN'T DO THIS.

NO! *NO!*

NOOOOOOO!

THAT'S THE CHIEF!

KRRSSHH

AIIEERRGGH!

THUMP

DAMMIT. CHIEF. WHO... WHO DID THIS?

TRACY! OVER THERE-- SOMEONE'S CUTTING OUT!

STAY WITH HIM, PAT--CALL AN AMBULANCE--

TRACY, I DON'T THINK THERE'S MUCH H--

DO IT!

WE'RE SETTLING THIS. NOW.

STOP RIGHT THERE! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

STOP NOW OR I'LL FIRE--YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY WITH THIS!

OH, TRACY... I ALREADY HAVE.

NO...CAN'T LET...

WHOA!

DAMMIT! I COULD SEE HIM. I COULD HAVE--

THUMP

AIIEEERRGGH!

NO...NO...KEEP IT TOGETHER... CAN'T LET...

...I SEE IT... I SEE HIM NOW...

...I SHOULD'VE NOTICED IT BEFORE...

...SO CLEAR...

TRACY?

WHOA, WHOA, TRACY--IT'S *US*. YOU OKAY?

PAT...TESS... I'M FINE, JUST...

...IT'S CLEAR TO ME NOW. I KNOW WHAT THE BLANK WAS DOING. THE POSTURING. TOSSING BRANDON OUT THE WINDOW... IT'S NOT JUST A *SICKNESS*...

THEN WHAT IS IT?

THE BLANK IS SHOWING US UP. HE'S SHOWING *OFF.*

THIS IS A GAME TO HIM.

AND WE'RE LOSING. *BADLY.*

TRACY! DETECTIVE!
OFFICER GROVE.
I CAME AS QUICKLY AS I HEARD...OHMYGOD... CHIEF...THEY GOT BRANDON?!
SLOW DOWN, KID. IT'S A CRIME SCENE OVER HERE.
GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF, WILLYA? I KNOW IT'S TOUGH--
WHEN WILL IT END, PAT? WHEN WILL THIS ALL *END*?!
IT WILL END, GROVE. IT HAS TO. AND I FEEL LIKE I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE BLANK...WHY HE'S DOING WHAT HE'S DOING...
WHAT *IS* HE DOING, TRACY?
ARE YOU ASKING AS A FRIEND--OR A *REPORTER*, TESS?
I GUESS I DESERVE THAT.

NO, NO--YOU DIDN'T. THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN HARD ON ALL OF US.

THE BLANK IS *SICK*. A TWISTED PSYCHOPATH. WE ALL KNOW THAT.

BUT I THINK I UNDERSTAND HIM BETTER, TOO.

IN HIS OWN, TWISTED WAY...THE BLANK IS TRYING TO HELP. HE THINKS HE'S ***CLEANSING*** THE CITY OF BAD PEOPLE. CRIMINALS WHO DIDN'T GET THE SENTENCE THEY ***DESERVED***.

IT'S PERVERSE...HE'S TRYING TO IMPRESS US. SHOW THE POLICE HOW TO DO IT. HOW ***THEY'D*** DO IT.

THE BLANK IS A SICK INDIVIDUAL. BUT THAT DOESN'T EXCUSE ANY OF THIS.

AND I REFUSE TO LET THIS MANIAC TAKE ANOTHER LIFE IN THE NAME OF THEIR INSANE TAKE ON LAW AND ORDER.

"DICK TRACY.

"I HAD SUCH HOPE FOR YOU.

IS INVITING ME TO THIS DINNER YOUR WAY OF SAYING WE'RE FRIENDS AGAIN, TESS?

"WAS IT FOOLISH OF ME, TRACY..."

YOU KNOW, FRIENDS DISAGREE ALL THE TIME.

IS THAT SO?

"...TO THINK YOU'D *APPRECIATE* MY WORK?"

SURE. YOU ARGUE, THEN YOU CIRCLE BACK AND BECOME FRIENDS AGAIN.

I'M A REPORTER, TRACY. IT'S MY JOB. AND I'M DAMN GOOD AT IT.

"IT'S LONELY. AND DANGEROUS. CLEANING UP THIS CITY. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE WITH ME."

AND SOMETIMES, IT'S GOING TO PISS YOU OFF. IF I DIDN'T, WELL-- THEN I WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A REPORTER, WOULD I?

"INSTEAD, I'M LEFT WONDERING--"

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME, TRACY?

"--IF YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM, TOO."

I'M TIRED, TESS. I'M OVER WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE. I CARE ABOUT YOU. AND I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU NEED TO DO-- BELIEVE ME.

AND, HONESTLY, I'M JUST ENJOYING THIS FOOD. THIS SEAT. THIS RESPITE.

AND *YOUR* COMPANY.

"I SEE IT NOW. YOUR WEAKNESS. YOUR UNWILLINGNESS TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT."

FRIENDLY COMPANY?

"WHAT'S *NEEDED*."

NO. NOT FRIENDS.

MORE THAN THAT?

YES...

"WHICH MEANS, TRACY--"

"--YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS ALL THE REST."

To Be Continued...

MAD CAVE

DICK TRACY®

#10

THE BLANK... REVEALED!

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THE PALE KNIGHT

#1

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THEY LEAVE A CONTINENT WHERE A NEW AND TERRIBLE FORM OF DEATH HAS APPEARED.

AND EACH DAY ADVANCES MANY MILES.

NAPLES IS A CHARNEL HOUSE, DESERTED EVEN BY THE BIRDS.

AVIGNON HAS RUN OUT OF CEMETERIES.

IN PARIS, A LARGE AND BRIGHT STAR IS SEEN, PRESAGING DAYS OF GREAT SORROW.

ENGLAND MIGHT THINK ITS ISLAND STATUS WILL SPARE IT FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE CONTAGION.

BUT ENGLAND IS ABOUT TO GET A NASTY SHOCK. DEATH IS COMING.

ONE OF ENGLAND'S GREATEST KNIGHTS-- SIR HUGH DE GREY, HERO OF ARTOIS--AT THAT MOMENT WISHES FOR NOTHING **BUT** DEATH.

UGHH AAAGHH!

HE TRIES TO FORGET THE HEAVING OF BOTH THE SHIP AND HIS STOMACH BY LISTENING TO THE PRAYERS OF THE OTHER MEN.

BESEECHING GOD TO SAVE THEM FROM THE UNNATURAL WAVES.

THE LOWEST SCOUNDREL CALLS OUT TO HIS MAKER.

NOT SO LONG AGO, SIR HUGH, TOO, WOULD HAVE BOWED DOWN BEFORE GOD.

NOW HE SIMPLY **RESTS.**

AND WISHES FOR NOTHING MORE THAN SLEEP.

WITH SLEEP COMES THE DREAM THAT HAS HAUNTED HIM FOR DAYS.

AND HE IS BACK IN FRANCE.

IN ARTOIS.

IN HELL.

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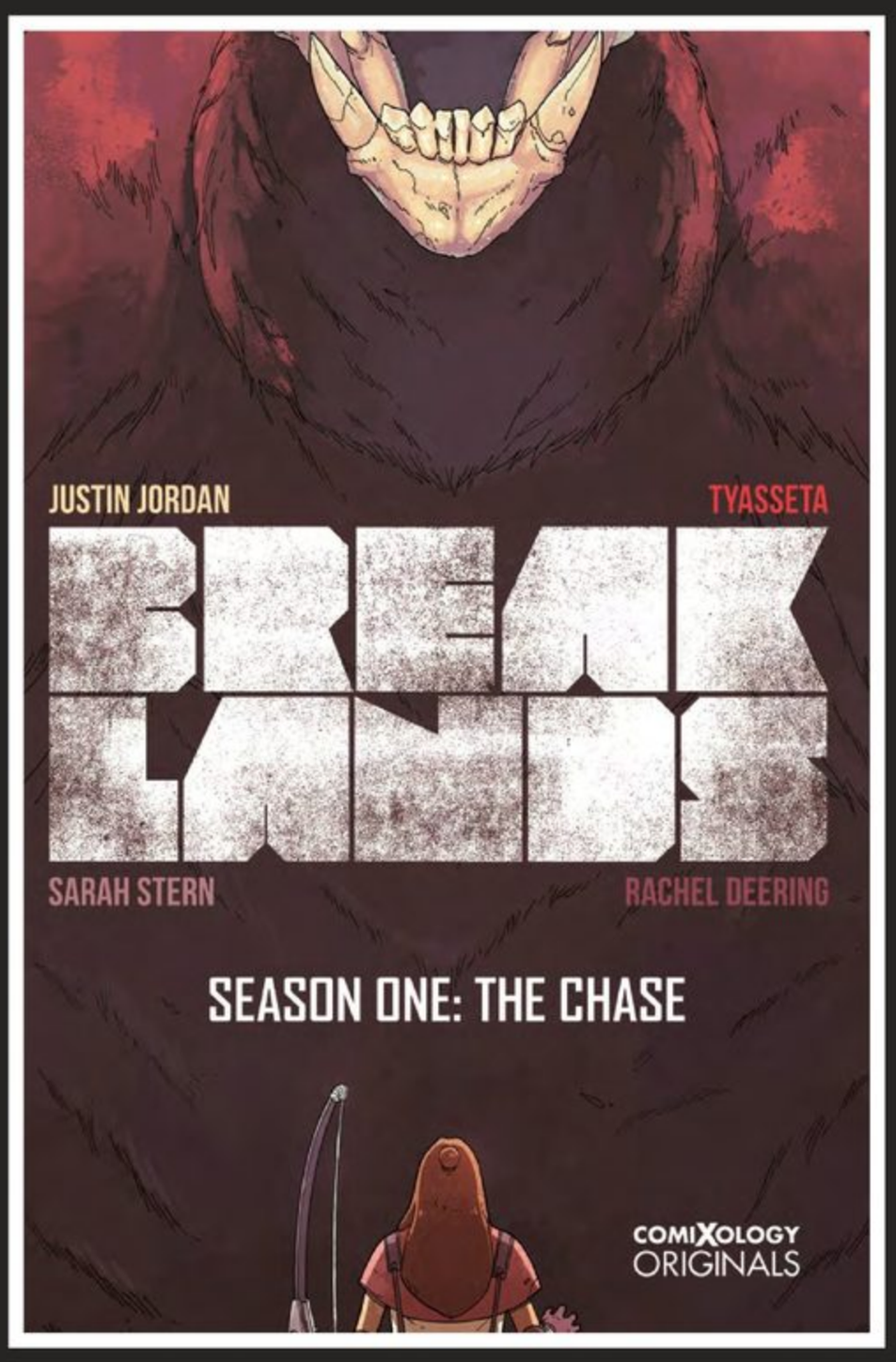

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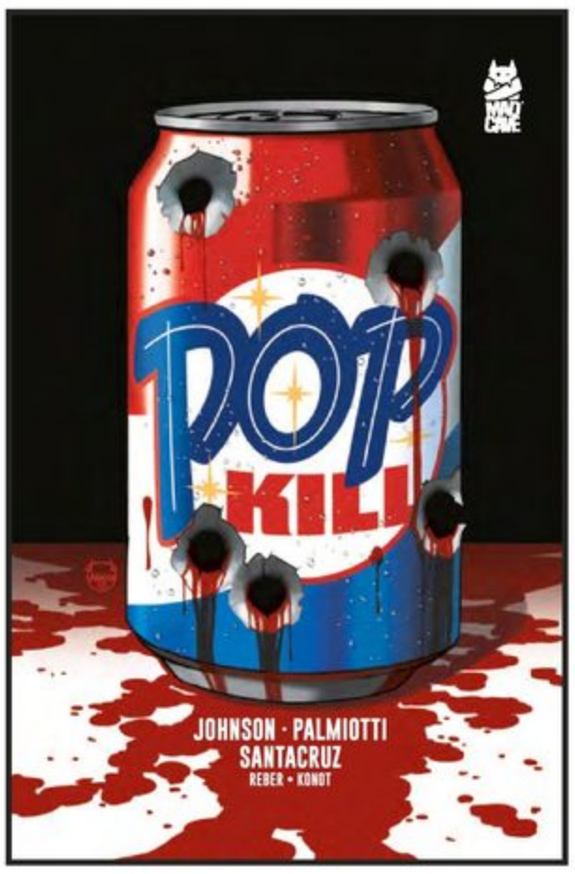

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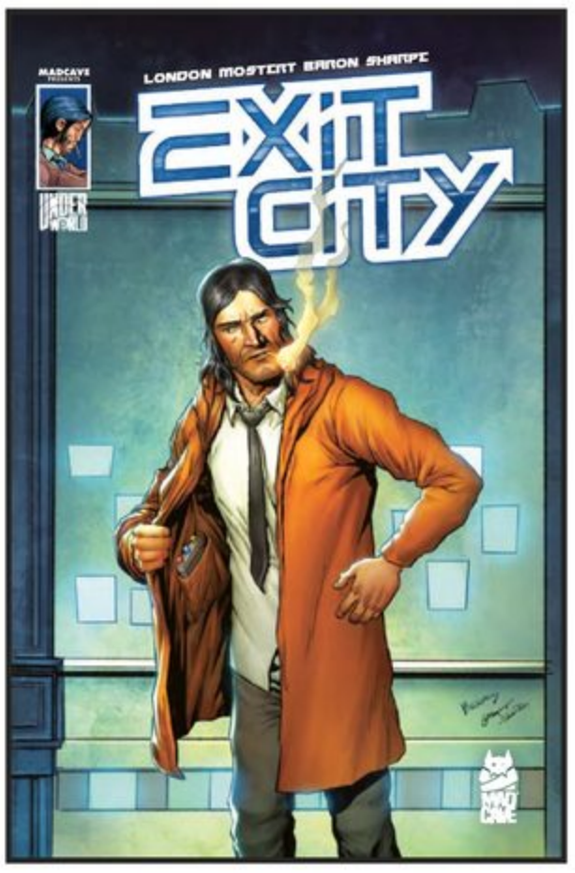

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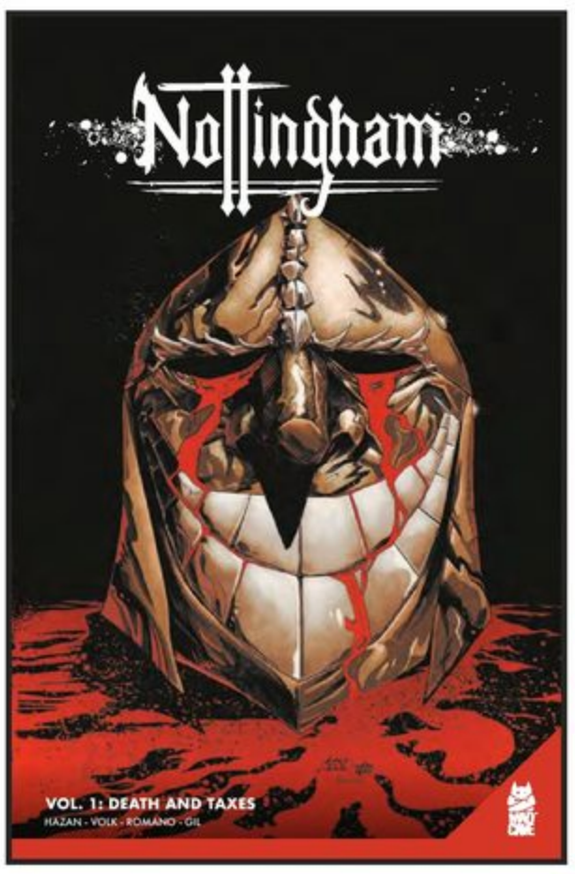

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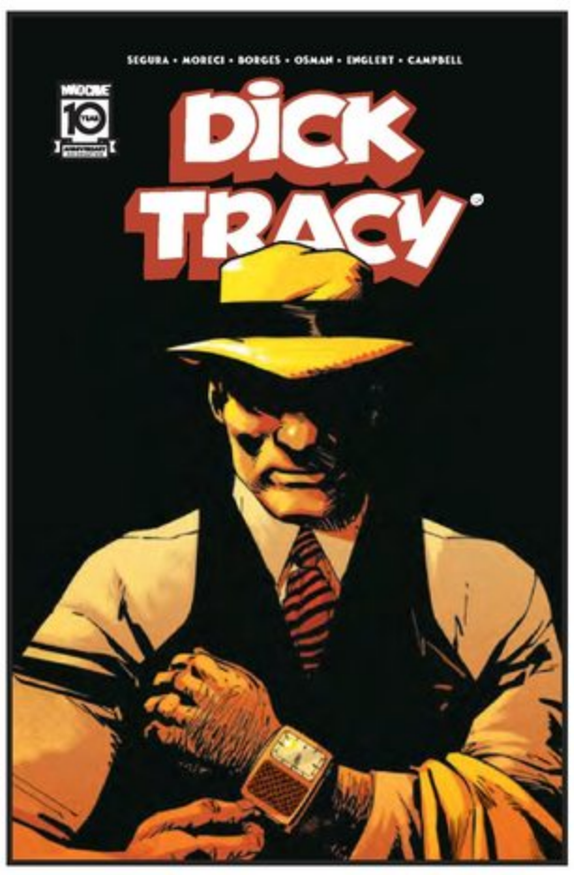

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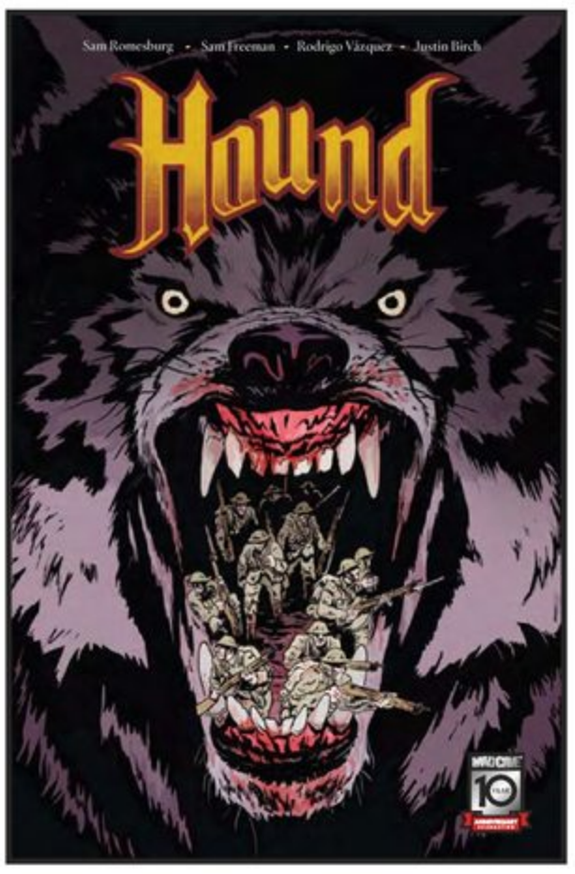

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